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COMMUNICATION.

Mr. Jos. B. Cumming writes concerning the Great Seals of Georgia, correcting some mistakes in the article in the September Quarterly, and adding some interesting facts.

November 13, 1917.

William Harden, Esq., Editor,
Georgia Historical Quarterly,
Savannah, Ga.

Dear Sir:—

I read with great pleasure and much instruction Mr. Henry R. Goetchius' article on the great seals of Georgia, published in the September number of the Quarterly. It may possibly add a little to the great value of this contribution to Georgia history if I correct one or two minor mistakes in the article.

The seal, which Governor Jenkins took with him when he was ejected from the office of Governor by the Federal General Ruger, the Military Governor, under the reconstruction Act of Congress, was the seal kept in the Governor's office and used by him to impress purely executive documents. Some persons, though evidently not Mr. Goetchius, have confused this seal with the great seal of the State.

Mr. Goetchius represents Governor Jenkins as appearing before the General Assembly of Georgia and delivering a speech on the occasion of the return of the seal. This is a mistake. Governor Jenkins did not address the Legislature in person. He wrote what he considered a message to the first legal Legislature after his deposition and entrusted it to me to be delivered to his first legal successor, Governor James M. Smith. It was transmitted by Governor Smith to the Legislature. I had the honor at that time to be Speaker of the House of Representatives; and on the reception of the message by the House, I left the Chair and offered the enclosed Resolution. (Enclosed on separate sheet.)

The Resolution was adopted with practical unanimity, though I am not able to say now—45 years after the event—whether the twelve or fifteen Republican members of the House, all but two or three being negroes, voted for or against the Resolution or simply abstained from voting.

When the fac simile seal, provided for by the Resolution, was completed, Governor Smith kindly delegated to me the privilege of making manual delivery of it to Governor Jenkins. In his will, of which the late Col. Chas. Colcock Jones and I were executors, he bequeathed the seal to Dr. Chas. Jenkins Montgomery of Augusta, Ga., the son of his adopted daughter, Mrs. James Gardner Montgomery, and that original seal, and not a fac simile of it, is the one now in the possession of the Georgia Historical Society, having been presented to it by Dr. Montgomery.

There was a period of anxiety and distress on the part of Governor Jenkins in connection with the return of the seal to the State. He had written out his message on the subject and then went to the receptacle where he supposed the seal was to be found. It was missing, and for several days he was in great distress lest it should have finally disappeared. After much thought and searching of his memory, he recalled the place of deposit and on resorting to it found the seal intact.

Very truly yours,

JOS. B. CUMMING.

WHEREAS, The Honorable Charles J. Jenkins, when expelled by usurpers from the office of Governor of this State, had the firmness and the courage to save the public treasure from the plunderers, and applied it to the obligations of the State, and also removed the archives of the State Treasury, and saved from desecration the Seal of the Executive Department; and whereas, his efforts to save the people of Georgia from oppression relaxed not with his hold upon the Executive office, but in the midst of discouragement were continued before the Supreme Court of the United States so long as there was any hope of success; and whereas, preserving the archives and the seal until, in better times, he might restore them to his first rightful successor, he has delivered them to his Excellency the Governor; and whereas, gratitude to a great and good man, deference to the feelings of the people of Georgia, and the encouragement of patriotism and virtue in the generations to come, alike render it good that we should make and put in imperishable form a recognition of his fidelity to his trust: therefore be it—

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE STATE OF GEORGIA, That his Excellency the

Governor be authorized and instructed to have prepared, and in the name of the people of Georgia to present to the Honorable Charles J. Jenkins, a seal to be the fac simile of the one preserved and restored by him, except that, in addition to the other devices, it shall have this inscription: "Presented to Charles J. Jenkins by the State of Georgia;" and this legend: "In arduis fidelis."

Approved August 22, 1872.